

Scythe by lionessvalenti

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Summary:

Steve sees something strange in the fields of Indiana.

Scythe

Author's Note:

- For [Sholio](#).

October, 1991

Somewhere in Indiana

The last of the sticky summer was fading into fall and Steve drove with the windows down in the Camaro letting in the sweet evening air. The radio was busted, but he was serenaded by the crickets and cicadas. He tossed his sunglasses into the passenger seat as sun set in the rearview mirror. There was a rattle from somewhere deep in the engine, but the car hadn't failed him yet. He needed to get just a little bit further.

Brown stalks of corn lined the two lane highway. The stalks bent toward the road, closing in on him, the dried out husks waving in the wind, like a friendly hello, or a warning. Steve hadn't passed a town or even a roadside gas station for miles. He still had half a tank.

It was almost a shadow, the break in the corn, and the man, or at least he assumed it was a man, in the black robe harvesting the stalks with a scythe. His face was obscured by an oversized hood.

Steve pumped the brakes, slowing to a stop to watch the figure. He'd seen a lot of weird things in his time since he left Hawkins. Hell, he saw weird shit in Hawkins, where this had all started. He believed in a lot of things, other dimensions and things falling through the cracks and into our world being the least of them.

It was a strange first thought, but he was pretty sure they didn't harvest corn with scythes anymore, at least not for a thousand acres worth of land. Maybe it was performance art, dressing up like the grim reaper with no one around to cut down dried husks on the off chance someone like Steve would drive by. Art people were strange. It could be perfectly likely. Just because he'd seen weird shit didn't mean he automatically assumed something out of the ordinary was something terrible.

He became aware that the sound of crickets had faded away, and now he could only hear the engine and the breeze. A cold pit began to form in Steve's stomach. The longer he sat there, the less he liked it. The air was starting to turn sickly and rotten through the open windows.

Perhaps hearing the rattle in the Camaro, the figure stopped his work and turned toward the road. He stuck the scythe into the soft earth and leaned his weight against it. He brought his hand, bone white in the distance and fading daylight, to where his forehead would have been beneath the hood and gave Steve a lazy salute.

Steve shivered. He thought, briefly, of the weapons in the trunk. The guns, the baseball bat spiked with nails that he still carried from his teenage days. Instead, he returned the salute, then hit the gas without looking back.

He'd stared down a lot of monsters. He believed death was out there, and he knew one day they would come face to face. But he wasn't about to go pick a fight. Not anymore.